

Christian Values in Business: Asset or Liability?

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith D'Ambra", written over the printed name.

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Abstract

Recent decades have introduced significant advances in technology and business. Along with these advancements has come acceleration in skills, improvements in productivity and efficiency, and while great successes, also great scandal and failure. This paradox leads to the question of which factors separate the firms that fail from those that continually thrive. This thesis encompasses the understanding and relevance of Christian values in business. The hypothesis tested is that long-term success and sustainability are significantly enhanced if a firm be founded on strong Christian-based values. After identifying and defining Christian values, extensive research was conducted through analysis of texts, related videos, primary interviews, and the attendance of speakers and conferences to create a complete finding on the impact of Christian values in business. Ultimately, this thesis assesses the idea that firms founded on Christian values possess an advantage in long-term success and sustainability, and it answers the question whether Christian values are an asset or liability in business.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Keith D'Ambra for advising me through this project. His help has guided me through this difficult task of integrating Christian values and business, a topic which many of the field's professionals choose not to acknowledge. Keith's thoughtful insight and ideas have encouraged me in both this project and my career here at Ball State University. I truly appreciate and value the many hours, critiques, meetings, and phone conversations spent in the process of developing this thesis.

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Introduction

There is a missing link in today's business. Some firms succeed because they have it, while other firms perish from lack of it. This factor is incredibly powerful in forming relationships and effective business practices. This factor has enabled firms to operate successfully for the long term while others have faltered and failed in a matter of minutes if it is not held. Scandals are left and right, the stock market is up and down, uncertainty is everywhere, and businesses are in dire need of a true, rightful leader with a moral compass. What guides this moral compass, and what could possibly be responsible for such feast or famine for a firm in respect to performance and sustainability? This paper attempts to measure whether Christian values provide an answer/solution to this question.

Hypothesis

When it comes to business, values like integrity and honesty are listed on many firms' websites. However, to truly operate based on these values is an entirely different challenge. Three outcomes are possible in terms of using these Christian values: the values can hinder performance, help performance, or simply do nothing. Through both primary and secondary research, each of these possibilities will be analyzed. Hypothetically, the research and discussion below aims to prove long-term success and sustainability are significantly enhanced if a firm's behavior and culture are based on strong Christian-based values.

Definition of Christian Values

In order to determine if Christian values influence long-term performance and sustainability in firms, these values must first be defined. While a plethora of descriptors and

beliefs apply to the Christian faith, five central values can be derived from its breadth and depth: honesty, integrity, morality, humility, and the concept of servant leadership. These five values serve not only as the representative factors of Christianity due to their existence in every Christian denomination and prevalence in Biblical passages, especially those concentrated on Jesus, but also due to their relevancy to the discussion of Christianity and application to business. To clarify, these five values are simply meant to exemplify Christianity in the context of this thesis discussion and their underlying values to successful sustainable business, rather than attempt to limit the faith by using five words. Keeping this in mind, honesty, integrity, morality, humility, and the concept of servant leadership will be defined below, including a Biblical example for reference, as well as an example of its relation to business practices.

Honesty

Beginning with honesty, this value can be best characterized by the Contemporary Management, 6e text as “sincerity or truthfulness,” (George, 82). This value is held highly among many Christians as a virtue, as it is evident repeatedly throughout the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) in the Bible. Beyond the Gospels and the story of Jesus, honesty appears in other books as well. For instance, Proverbs 12:22 reads “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are His delight,” (The Life Application Bible for Students: The Living Bible, 582). The value of honesty focuses on telling the truth and acting accordingly. From the Bible, it can be inferred that those who are dishonest defy God, while those that are honest please Him.

In business, this can be seen commonly through the efforts and sacrifices that firms make for investors. Top management in a firm must be honest in its attempts to maximize shareholder

wealth, constantly evaluating the decisions made to realize if they are in the best interest of the true owners and risk takers. Honesty is vital to all business practices, for sometimes individuals tell the truth but hold some information back. Being completely honest eliminates this risk. In contrast, failure to be sincere or honest means an organization's leaders may possess ulterior motives for shareholder wealth maximization, which may lead to short-term profits or bonuses for employees but eventual demise for the firm and shareholders.

Integrity

Next, Contemporary Management, 6e defines integrity as, "firm adherence to what is believed to be good or right," (George, 211). In the Bible, this was evident when Jesus went into the desert for 40 days and was tempted by the devil three times, but never gave in. Through adherence to God's commands and quoting Scripture, Jesus overcame temptation, which can be done just as practically in business by adhering to a higher power with Christian values rather than potential unethical human leadership. Jesus goes on to quote in the Gospel "Watch and pray, that you may not enter temptation. The spirit is truly ready, but the flesh is weak!" (The Life Application Bible for Students: The Living Bible, 898 - Matthew 26:41). Often times in this passage, the word temptation is translate to "the test," reading "pray that you might not undergo the test." Jesus warns his followers of the power of temptation and the value and importance of integrity.

This concept translates directly into the business world as well, as a bevy of firms claim integrity as a core value. This concept will be explored in greater depth later in this thesis, as its importance is of great significance. Integrity, while integral in all aspects of business, is related to the financial and accounting frauds that have resulted in the great scandals and subsequent

business failures of this era. Employees tempted or bribed with financial, career, health, and other benefits often mortgage a company's long term success. Without integrity and a higher moral calling and Judge (God), many individuals have and will continue to fall to these pressures and temptations.

Morality

Morality, the third Christian value, is classified by the Contemporary Management sixth edition as, "an approach that best maintains and protects the fundamentals," (George, 124). In the Bible, this is present in nearly every parable or encounter with Jesus. There is always a lesson or theme behind the story, in which the sinners or sick recognize their faults, repent, and praise God. From this realization, the people influenced by Jesus begin to operate with a moral compass. This ultimate obedience is captured best in Acts 5:29, which reads "...We must obey God rather than men," (The Life Application Bible for Students: The Living Bible, 1013). In fact, Christians break down these teachings into the unofficial two most important commandments: Love God and love your neighbor.

When it comes to business, a moral compass is mandatory. In any practice or relationship, employees must place the firm and shareholders ahead of personal gain. Placing the firm ahead of one's self will enable an individual to maximize potential contributions due to the intense responsibility of being a part of something bigger than one's self. Possessing the *right* moral compass, as evaluated by the higher Judge, is also integral to this process. If the firm or manager placed ahead of personal gains is also practicing immorally, then the entire purpose is lost due to the abandonment of a moral compass. Christian values provide for the foundations of the right moral compass to be present and effective.

Humility

Humility is also present in many Biblical passages, and it is best categorized by esteemed author in the field of leadership, John Dickson, as, “the noble choice to forgo your status, deploy your resources or use your influence for the good of others before yourself,” (Dickson, 24). Possibly the most prime example of humility is when Jesus washed his disciples’ feet (The Life Application Bible for Students: The Living Bible, 993 - John 13:1-17). Jesus did this to show that he came to lead by example and by serving – not being served, but he was not so important that he could not do a servant’s work.

In the business realm, being humbled is often viewed as a negative characteristic for a firm or individual. This sense of humility is often taxing on the performance of firms. However, it normally helps to restore the firm and strategize to better develop the core functions of a business. In addition, humility within a firm is also beneficial. When a CEO or member of top management creates humility through helping a subordinate at a task that the high position of power normally would not execute, it creates a positive environment and better culture for the workplace.

This is most apparent through the analysis of the inverted pyramid approach to organizational structure. In a normal organization, customers interact with the lower-level managers who report to mid-level, who then report to upper management and the CEO. However, when this pyramid is analyzed in an inverse fashion it reveals how a true business focused on the customer should operate: the CEO encourages the upper management who relay the message to the mid-level and lower-level managers who interact with the customers.

Through this approach, subordinates no longer fear their bosses and as a result become encouraged to share more opinions and useful ideas that top management may not consider alone. Beyond this, CEO's are also helping to serve instead of being served. The reality of this problem is captured in *Helping People Win at Work*, which states, "The problem in most organizations is that there is little trust between managers and their direct reports, because managers often have to sort their people into normal distribution curves or, even worse, rank-order their people," (Blanchard, 118). This rank-order format creates unwanted and nonperformance-based tiers among employees, thus making it tough for top management to better relate and offer help to its subordinates. Humility has the potential to remedy this problem in corporate culture.

Servant Leadership

The final of these five values, servant leadership, poses a greater challenge by definition because it cannot just be found in the dictionary or a common business textbook. In effect, servant leadership is exactly what the term sounds like: leaders that serve the people they lead; however, it may be more plausible to define this value through demonstration. Matthew 20:28 reads "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many," (The Life Application Bible for Students: The Living Bible, 891). In this passage, Jesus, the "King of kings" and "Lord of lords" is claimed as a servant rather than royalty. In truth, Jesus' ministry was one of service and example, to be a model for others to follow and emulate. This is a very valuable concept in leadership.

In business, this idea of servant leadership can be seen through how a firm's leader listens to, responds to, and supports subordinates. According to his book *Lead Like Jesus*, Ken

Blanchard explains, “Jesus knew His people intimately, He respected them profoundly, and He equipped them to be competent and confident leaders,” (Blanchard, 113). Investing in employees rather than focusing on one’s self is very effective in business leadership. The potential of an organization can depend entirely on servant leadership through treatment of subordinates by top management. For example, seven subordinates could spend 10% of their time making their boss look good, resulting in a subordinate productivity loss of 70%. This may make the boss look 10-20% better, but it is not healthy for the organization. Conversely, if a servant leader sacrifices 10-20% of their time to support the efforts of seven subordinates, then those subordinates may increase productivity 10-20% each. This amounts to the cumulative increase of 70-140% for the firm. While the boss may not look 10-20% better, the firm is much better off, and theoretically, the boss should keep his job from the maximization and investment in personnel. People will trust and approve of the leadership if they are guided through mentorship and cared for through professional development. Servant leadership can also stretch to an inter-firm and community level through corporate responsibility, philanthropies or charity, and community involvements.

Having defined these five Christian values individually, shown their validity through Biblical reference, and exemplified their presence in the business world, the next step is to develop a hypothesis.

Before this hypothesis is tested and discussed, it is of significant importance to acknowledge both opposing and differing views on the topic, as well as define the purpose of the presented argument. The discussion below does not dictate that one must be a Christian to be successful in business, nor must one be Christian to display Christian values. This thesis is not meant to discriminate by any means as to one’s specific religious affiliation or beliefs, but rather

to simply measure the impact that Christian-based values have on businesses. Accordingly, the purpose of this research is not to demean other religions or beliefs, nor is it to disprove the potential relationship that those systems or denominations may have with operating firms. The correlation between Christian values and long-term success and sustainability is the only subject discussed in this paper.

Research

Based on the aforementioned premise, the research steps of this Christian-based values project were as follows:

1. Conduct secondary research (Books, Websites, etc. to generate ideas and sources)
2. Discussion with advisor (Weekly meetings to measure progress and gain feedback)
3. Conduct primary research (America's Best Hope Conference, speakers, interviews with business leaders)
4. Conduct further secondary research to support/disprove findings

The culmination of this process has led to the argument and conclusion that long-term success and sustainability are greatly enhanced if a firm is founded on strong Christian-based values.

Sustainable Firms

Reflecting on the economic peaks and valleys, much has happened over the history of the U.S. Wars have been fought, technology has rocked the world with its innovation, depressions and crashes have occurred, movements in equality and justice have changed culture, and globalization of business and markets expanding rapidly. Firms that endure these challenges and effectively adapted to these changes are the firms that succeed in the long-term. Too often,

management changes capital structure drastically to ax expenses at any cost or tries to cut corners in order to meet quota or projections. While profitability and shareholder maximization are the main goals of most firms, it is important to identify and analyze a firm that has achieved this profitability responsibly in the long run, rather than in a “get rich quick fashion.” Firms that fall victim to temptations in the short run to meet projections jeopardize long-term success and sustainability. In order to isolate the factor that separates a sustainable firm from an unsustainable firm, it is helpful to take a look at each.

According to a list of the top sustainable companies by Forbes, GE, founded in 1892, tops all competing firms (Forbes Online). As one of the most diversified entities in business today, has built a successful and sustainable business model through dispersing risk and capturing opportunity by spreading its operations into many related and unrelated industries. However, the way in which a firm attains this diversification and sustainability is the true measure of a firm. In the case of GE, CEO Jeff Immelt publicly stated that the three core values of its business are integrity, performance, and change. Notice that integrity has been identified as a Christian value above and has been placed first on Immelt’s list. According to distinguished author of *The Maxwell Daily Reader*, John Maxwell states, “The bottom line when it comes to integrity is that it allows others to trust you. And without trust, you have nothing. Trust is the single most important factor in personal and professional relationships...And it is key to becoming a person of influence,” (Maxwell, 343). Integrity, for GE, is clearly a defining element in its success and ability to achieve its market share goals and position.

Luckily for Immelt, the path for GE was paved by Jack Welch, a man known for his remarkable management abilities, the 4,000% growth of GE in 20 years, and his moral compass in business practices. This is not to claim that GE is a Christian business at heart, but that the use

of a Christian value system ranked at the top of its corporate values list has enabled GE to become the sustainable powerhouse that it is. The same is seen in many businesses worldwide, as firms intend to find ways to gain customer trust in order to penetrate the market. However, the real test determines whether a firm preaches Christian values or actually acts according to them. The true sustainable companies, like GE, choose to operate by the latter.

Other notable firms also stress integrity and have sustained growth throughout the history of the U.S. Whirlpool has also been ranked as a top 20 most trustworthy company (Forbes). Whirlpool frequently emphasizes integrity in its operations and helping others. This firm was founded in 1911 and is joined by other highly touted and respectable that highlight integrity as a core value, including, Ford (founded in 1903), Colgate (founded in 1806), Hartford (founded in 1810), and even McDonald's (founded in 1940). These firms compete in different industries, yet each one embraces that integrity is an essential and unwavering value in its corporate culture and sustainability. So, if this Christian value is so important in a sustainable firm, then what happens when firms fail to act with integrity?

Scandals

Considered one of the most highly publicized, recent scandals of in U.S. history, the Ponzi scheme led by Bernie Madoff resulted in the loss of nearly \$65B. Beyond this, the astounding list of hundreds of billions of dollars lost continues with companies such as Worldcom, Enron, Lehman Brothers, Tyco, Arthur Anderson, and the many others that have occurred in the past decade alone. Each of these instances, though integrity-related, is also impacted by honesty and morality. Now more than ever, it is crucial that firms look at who they are hiring and ensure that talent acquired shares the values that the firm stands for. As it is seen

in the case of Madoff, it can only take one employee to lack any of the five Christian values and take down a business.

While these instances occurred, they are certainly outliers. It seems impossible that every firm would operate as these entities have. In a unique presentation brought to Ball State University, Weston Smith enlightened his audience from the firsthand account of a whistleblower. Smith had been a CFO for a Fortune 500 company, HealthSouth Corporation, but found himself quickly transferred from his luxurious vacation cabin to a prison cell in a matter of days. Smith mentioned that when growing up he was taught and behaved as an “ethical” person, and did not believe in scheming, lying, cheating, or mistreating people, but when put in a position of power and tempted to manipulate a small portion of earnings to enhance the reported results of the company, he did so without hesitation.

Unfortunately, that was only the beginning. Smith then found his top management team guiding him and others to a multi-year and multi-billion dollar fraud. Smith encouraged the class to reflect on the analogy of a frog in boiling water. He said, “a frog placed in boiling water will hop out immediately, but a frog placed in lukewarm water that is heated up will remain in the water until it is boiled to death.” This relates to his situation because if offered a multi-billion dollar scandal for bonuses and a lake house, Smith said he would have rejected it immediately. That is not how it happens, though. It starts small (in this case it was a \$40,000 accounting error) and builds up to a point that is uncontrollable. Smith finally realized what was going on around him, the lies he was telling, the lies the auditing team that HealthSouth hired went along with, and the potential ruins the corporation could cause in the lives of stakeholders. Smith turned himself and the corporation in, shortening his sentence and giving birth to his newfound profession.

Smith said that it was tough to find work coming out of prison due to his record. When he finally got a job, two years down the road his boss asked him to lie for the firm, and this time Smith refused and quit his position. His boss mentioned that since Smith was a known liar and great at the craft, the firm would hire him to eventually make a \$40 million lie. Smith was appalled, leading him to question if every business in the U.S. operates in this fashion. According to Smith, through his experience and connections, he categorized fraudulent reports at an “epidemic level.” Smith’s life has been changed drastically because of his past, and he now travels the country speaking frequently on “ethics and *integrity* within business.” If he had had this core Christian value system, the first manipulation would never have occurred, and the direction would never have been set.

Speaking on Christian Values

From Smith’s presentation and experience, one can conclude that this problem exists. In fact, it is relatively common across the country and often starts with a small cover up or lie. Smith’s new career is committed to the prevention of this “epidemic.” Smith joins a multitude of others in this ongoing profession and challenge of living by a moral compass.

America’s Best Hope

At the annual America’s Best Hope Conference held in Noblesville, IN on November 2, 2012, many of these leaders gathered to speak and teach those in attendance about the many benefits of Christian values (Pictures from the event can be viewed in Appendix A). Host Clark Kellogg shared his testimony and career with the crowd, accentuating the importance of mentorship in success and values as he warmed the audience up for the many interviews occurring that day. Those interviewed ranged from business executives and best-selling authors

on leadership like Ken Blanchard and to successful coaches like Tony Dungy and even top-ranked Indiana University Division I Men's Basketball Coach Tom Crean. This mixture of leaders each forwarded the idea of Christian values within business in a unique way.

Marcia Barnes, President and CEO of Defender Direct, approaches work as if it is ministry. Barnes stated, "Everyone you work with was created by God, and He has a plan for them." When a member of top management believes that her team is comprised of employees, each with a special plan, it is not surprising that success is found and scandal is avoided. Barnes is doing her best to impersonate Jesus and truly value each member of her team. Her Christian values directly impact the culture at Defender Direct and the way the business operates and its financial and market share growth. In a similar but more public way, Founder and CEO of Prasco Laboratories, Tom Arington, shared his message with listeners. Tom mentioned that "culture is key, and we open every meeting with a prayer at Prasco." This is a more direct form of expressing Christianity at work, not just Christian values. While certainly the majority of firms are not openly Christian, it is another great example of how culture can be influenced by Christian values for the betterment of the employees and the firm.

Jeff Simmons, President of ELANCO, added to the idea that Christian values positively impact long-term success through culture when he stated "never become bigger than the company, cause, or customer." This exemplifies the Christian value of humility, and it highlights a point that should be taken to heart. Simmons is exhibiting the deep sense of responsibility that employees who exemplify Christian values possess. This responsibility obligates them to focus on the firm, placing the needs of the firm ahead of their own. This continues to support or embrace the Christian values like humility and servant leadership. To be driven by the idea that an employee is a crucial part of a firm, and that each employee has a

great responsibility to the firm as a whole, rather than to be driven by success and money will lead to many wins for the firm.

To further this idea, Tom Crean quoted, “when you’re talented and you put God first, there’s no telling what you can do...as long as you’re invested...you can’t just be interested, you need to be *invested*.” Clearly, talent must be at a high level in order to lead a firm successfully, but talent alone is not enough. This is evident in many of the observed scandals, as Enron, Worldcom, and even Madoff has significant amounts of talent. However, the missing factor was the strong culture based on Christian values.

Crean also mentions being interested versus being invested in the *team*’s success. To be interested in something will not suffice in pursuing a goal, especially if the goals pursued are those of the individual. In order to achieve a goal or make strides, one must be invested in the desired result. Leaders are often called upon to make sacrifices, and possibly the best example of this idea of servant leadership and sacrifice was Jesus dying on the cross, giving his own life for the betterment of humanity.

Ken Blanchard, author of many management books and recognized as a leader in the field of Christian values in business, identifies Jesus as this ideal leader. At the conference, Blanchard shared many thoughts emphasized in his book *Lead Like Jesus*. Blanchard declared Jesus as the greatest leader and storyteller, and that in order to be sustainable, as one leads, one must also serve another. In his opinion, Blanchard stated, “storytellers make the best mentors,” as they lead through service and example. Like Weston Smith, Blanchard believes that the business community is in desperate need of leadership with Christian values. He presents the idea of leading with the “heart, head, hands, and habit,” just as Jesus did. When critics challenge

his teachings, Blanchard rebuttals with the response that he shared with the audience: “Jesus is the most known figure to man...even atheists and those who do not believe in him know his name, story, and cannot argue His values...in addition, Jesus accomplished more in three years and gained more followers than any leader ever.” This emphasizes the power of Jesus’ vision Christian values and the sustainability of them. Jesus is still seen today as an example of the humility through service of others, and He provides testimony to the impact of a servant leader. Over two thousand years later, the enduring value of Christian principles is evident. In addition to its validation, the quote by Blanchard does not necessitate that one has to be Christian in order to understand or exemplify Christianity’s values.

Building Godly leaders pertains to the many thoughts shared from the America’s Best Hope Conference and interviews. Clearly, talent is present and technology is growing at an incredible rate. The only missing element is the moral compass to assure that the advancements are for the betterment of the firm. There is an obvious movement of successful managers preaching across the nation of the importance of values like integrity, servant leadership, and humility. These Christian values are the factor that Jeff Simmons claims will make the “older generation’s ceiling the next generation’s floor.” Without the proper values, the ceiling could fall.

Vocation

Of course, not everyone can be famous, become a leader, speak at a national convention, or draft a firm’s values. In a more realistic example, Randy Tempest shared his life story when visited the Ball State University campus. Tempest encouraged and challenged the audience, claiming that “it does not matter what level you are at in a company because anyone can be a

spiritual leader.” This quotation also relates to the Christian belief that each person has a vocation, or a special purpose for existence. Most people view vocations as strictly religious orders, such as becoming a priest, pastor, nun, monk, or any other liturgical position. Moreover, common people are called to be holy through their own vocations whatever field they may encompass.

While not a CEO or President, at his workplace, Receivables Management Partners, Tempest leads through example a pre-work Bible study for anyone in the firm, ranging from custodian to CEO that is interested in spiritual discussion and growth. Tempest also sets high standards for coworkers, as he shared with the students a new look at assignments and projects, stressing, “Turn in your work as if God is your boss, for both He and you will know if you are cheating your business and yourself.” Tempest has found an effective way to integrate his work and spiritual life. This system will help to promote Christian values and establishes a foundation for long-term success for the firm.

Literary Examples

Beyond speaking, another way to effectively reach the public in this identification of a need for Christian values in business is to write. Numerous publications further this idea in different ways, some classified as religious, while others mention this concept from a sheer sense of strategy. Examples of both will be discussed below in order to determine how Christian values have affected business and how they

Admittedly, the U.S. has not always the scandals that do occur and pop culture. ← ? integrity in the U.S. in the following statement: “Americans will always do the right thing, after they have exhausted all

All of pop culture?
Missing word or phrase?

other possibilities,” (Reed, 4). While no nation is perfect, it is evident that the U.S. has had problems in the past, and that “the public is also increasingly concerned about a loss of ethics and values in society,” (Reed, 4). The public’s concern, here, indicates that there is a need for leaders to rise up and speak as they have at conferences like America’s Best Hope. In sum, the past indicates a need for Christian values, and it is up to the present to supply that need.

According to *The Wal-Mart Way*, “success will only be achieved...as long as we never betray our values and continue to uphold them, no matter what it costs in short-term sales and profits,” (Soderquist, 2002). Emphasis the underlying Christian values is apparent throughout the book. In his account, Don Soderquist speaks on the intense integrity and Christian values that Wal-Mart prides itself on in relation to how the firm operates on price, charity, customers, and more. In his experience with possibly the most successful retailer of the current era, Soderquist knows that success will only continue if management adheres to these Christian values, primarily integrity. This is the factor that helps Wal-Mart to compete so competitively and gain supplier relationships that enable the legendary low prices.

This cost leadership structure has undoubtedly granted Wal-Mart great success in its business endeavors. While Christian values are evident in its practices, management is human; thus, error is inevitable. It would be borderline impossible to operate a truly and fully Christian firm through all practices and employee behavior, especially one with the magnitude of Wal-Mart. Recently, Wal-Mart has been scrutinized for underpaying female employees and engaging in multiple lawsuits per year. Soderquist, who retired before 2005, believed business and gaining customers was about doing the right thing, but that sense has been lost to some extent. This proves that using Christian values in business is a continuous process and battle against the unethical actions and temptations present in business.

Other approaches that prove Christian values will help organizations maintain success in the future include technological advancements, acquisitions and projects, and customers. With Christian values, firms approach technological advancements with a long-term view. This perspective allows firms to invest in the successful, efficient, and effective advancements, rather than risking it on the “flavor of the day.” Firms that are caught up in the moment often gamble when the newest technology hits the market. The irony of this “rat race” is that whoever wins the race is still a rat. Therefore, these firms operate with a sense of right and wrong. Doing the right thing in the right way allows these businesses to continually thrive. Furthermore, acquisitions and other projects are also executed in a long-term manner. Firms with Christian values will do what is best for both firms, the project, and the employees involved. Honesty and humility are very valuable in these processes. Finally, the way that firms embodying Christian values treat customers will continue to yield great benefits in the future. As previously stated, firms with Christian values are “never bigger than the customer.” All five Christian values contribute to the success in customer satisfaction, especially integrity.

Overall, the past and future in the U.S. economy identify a need, a supply, and a sustainable plan for Christian values. These values have been present for thousands of years and will only support firms in the future through the many technological advancements, acquisitions and projects, and customers that these firms will encounter.

International Support

From the above discussion, it has been identified that the inclusion of Christian values, like integrity, contributes to the sustainability of a firm. Further, it has been proven that the lack of Christian values makes a firm more vulnerable to failure. This is demonstrated through the infamous outliers, as well as smaller, local examples and speakers. As a prime example,

esteemed author Stewart Herman shares his research through the statement, “no one likely will contest the useful role that religions play in enabling their adherents to cope with the pressures and temptations of business...however – how is it possible to communicate wisdom from one worldview to the next?” (Herman, 26). In order to test the hypothesis if *Christian* values are responsible for the long-term success it is helpful to look outside the U.S.

In a presentation at the 2010 Summit Global Leadership Conference, Dr. Zhao Xiao, member of the Chinese communist party, presented some surprising and relevant findings in his experience and research of China’s economy. In his research for the Communist party Xiao came to the conclusion that China could not fully achieve economic power because of its failure to possess an acceptable moral compass that would elevate China to that status in the eyes of the world. Xiao assesses China’s performance in the past 30 years, proving that the country has caught up and progressed faster than any nation in human history in both population and economy. Regardless of this progress, though, there is no “Chinese Dream.” Xiao mentions this in respect to the “American Dream” that so many U.S. citizens pursue. China is not aspiring to be all that it can be, to push for the absolute best, and to become a superpower. The sad truth is that China has every opportunity to make the same dream a reality because China is greater in size, resources, and growth, yet such a vision or dream does not exist. Xiao argues that instead of attempting to mimic the cars and houses, China should attempt to embody the same values that the U.S. has, Christian values. According to Charles Moore, “Confucian teachings of filial piety have held for four thousand years the most important place in Chinese ethics,” (Moore, 411). Xiao clearly realizes China’s history and beliefs, and he forwards the idea that these Confucian values and teachings are not getting the job done, and that Christian values hold the best route to becoming this world power.

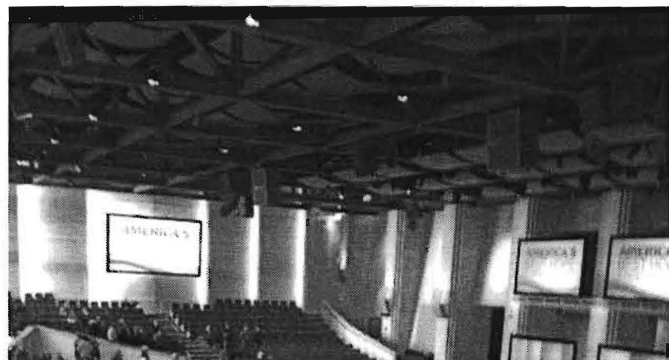
For years, China has learned from the best business practices, technologies, political regulations, and more, but one element is missing from China becoming a dominant force in the world. Dr. Zhao Xiao specifies, “Without the power to export ethics, China will not become a world power.” China has witnessed itself become one of the greatest in quantity, but it is struggling with quality. This quality, Xiao claims, can come through “the transformation of the cross in Christian life, church, and loving your neighbors, which the United States already shows.” Xiao profoundly believes that Christianity and Christian values is the missing link from China becoming a world power, as he states, “China is present in the economy, in politics, in athletics, but it is not present in faith. With faith, China will rise up as a city on a hill, a nation of integrity, and a blessing to the world.” Again, notice the word integrity. Xiao has said that he believes Christianity is the missing element in success, and portrays it with the word integrity. Integrity is one of a Christian values discussed repeatedly in this argument. As a result of his research, Xiao himself became a Christian, and the Chinese constitution has changed to acknowledge religion.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the whole discussion, above it was evidenced how firms like GE have Christian values and succeed continually in the long term. Also, in firms that publicly claim Christian values, like Ken Blanchard and other speakers at nationwide conferences, this is the factor they believe separates the sustainable from the unsustainable and saves them from fraud. From the opposite side of the spectrum, it was proven how firms that do not display Christian values are more susceptible to fraud and scandals, whether it is the infamous Bernie Madoff, mid-level manager Randy Tempest, or the lesser-known Weston Smith. In addition, areas where Christian values are not prevalent, like China, have leaders such as Dr. Zhao Xiao who

passionately claim Christian values are the only missing element to advancing to a dominant economy. In sum, talent alone, technology alone, or persuasive advertising and gaining market share, are not enough to sustain success. The one common fault in each instance is the failure of the individual and the organizational culture to embrace Christian values, to put “God as your boss.” This failure can become a success through strong adherence to the values of honesty, integrity, morality, humility, and the concept of servant leadership. Therefore, the culmination of this paper confidently summarizes that based on the research conducted, it can be determined that Christian values influence long-term success, and that firms with these values have an advantage in sustainability.

Appendix A – America’s Best Hope Conference



Appendix A – America's Best Hope Conference



Figure 1. Hundreds of business leaders from around the country attend America's Best Hope Conference in Noblesville, IN on November 2, 2012.



Figure 2. Ken Johnson, Chaplain of the Indianapolis Colts opens the conference with song and prayer.



Figure 3. Clark Kellogg interviews three Indiana business leaders who share their faith and practices inside and outside of work.



Figure 4. Tom Crean, Indiana University Men's Basketball Coach, speaks before the crowd about his faith incorporated with his strategy on the court.

Appendix B - Interview Questions

1. What are the core values of your company culture?
 - a. Why have you selected these?
2. Do your company's values set you apart from competitors? How?
3. Does your company exercise Christian values in the workplace/market place?
 - a. Examples? Programs?
4. In your experience, do you believe that there is an advantage to having Christian values in a company?
 - a. Culturally? Financially? Sustainably?
5. Separation of church and state seems to be a key principle in the U.S. Do you believe it should be the same for the workplace?
6. Do you believe that if all businesses operated on Christian values it would be favorable or unfavorable to competition?
7. Do employees showing their faith in action in business have a better or worse chance of being promoted? Indifferent?
8. What businesses do you see today that openly portray and operate using Christian values?
9. Do you see potential barriers to operating on Christian values and showing faith in business?
10. Do you believe that Christian values would prevent scandals such as infamous ones (Madoff, etc.)?
11. Do you believe that there are companies out there abusing the use of Christian values only to further their own sales?

Appendix C – Contacted Interviewees

1. Jack Welch (The Welch Way)
2. Blake Mycoskie (Toms)
3. Howard Schultz (Starbucks)
4. Ken Blanchard (The Ken Blanchard Companies)
5. Marcia Barnes (Defender Direct)
6. Tom Arington (Prasco Laboratories)

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CHRISTIAN VALUES IN BUSINESS

By: Joe Fazio

QUOTATIONS

- “In everything you do, ask these three questions, ‘Does this glorify God? Am I uniquely qualified to do it? Am I the *only* one that can do it? The answers to these will make a right path and career for you.” – Tony Dungy
- “Do good things for people, and don’t expect anything back. This is a model for success.” – Ken Blanchard
- “We cannot just be interested. We need to be *invested* in our jobs and our faith.” – Tom Crean

Interview Questions

1. What are the core values of you company culture?
 - a. Why have you selected these?
2. Do your company's values set you apart from competitors? How?
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10. Do you believe that Christian values would prevent scandals such as infamous ones (Madoff, etc.)?
11. Do you believe that there are companies out there abusing the use of Christian values only to further their own sales?
12. Do you have any questions for me?

Abstract

Recent decades have introduced significant advances in technology and business. Along with these advancements has come mastery in skills, improvements in corporations, but also great scandals. This discovery leaves the question of which factors separate the firms that fall to demise from those that continually thrive. This thesis encompasses the ideas of faith and its relevance in the traditional business model. The hypothesis assumes that long-term success and sustainability require a firm be founded on strong Christian-based values. After identifying and defining Christian values, extensive research was conducted through analysis of texts, related videos, primary interviews, and the attendance of speakers and conferences to create a complete finding on the role of faith in business. Ultimately, this thesis assesses the idea that firms founded on Christian values possess an advantage in success and sustainability in the business world.

America's Best Hope Conference

November 2, 2012



Clark Kellogg speaks
at America's Best Hope
Conference (Noblesville,
IN)



Tom Crean speaks at
America's Best Hope
Conference (Noblesville,
IN)

INFORMATION

- **Title:** Christian Values in Business
- **Advisor:** Keith D'Ambra
- **Project Type:** Research Paper
- **Sources:** Texts, Conferences, and Interviews
- **Author:** Joe Fazio
- **Major:** Business Finance

Research Sources

1. Lead Like Jesus (Ken Blanchard and Bill Hybels)
2. Helping People Win at Work (Ken Blanchard)
3. The Wal-Mart Way (Sam Walton)
4. The Bible (multiple authors)
5. Doing the Right Thing (recording, multiple speakers)
6. Willow Creek Conference (Recording of 2010, multiple speakers)
7. Grace Community Conference (Noblesville, IN, multiple speakers – November 2, 2012)
8. God in the Marketplace: 45 Questions Fortune 500 Executives Ask About Faith, Life, and Business, by: Henry T. Blackaby , Richard Blackaby (audiobook)
9. Brands of faith : marketing religion in a commercial age: Einstein, Mara
 - a. The changing religious marketplace -- The business of religion -- Branding faith -- The course to God -- The new televangelists -- Kabbalah: marketing designer spirituality -- The politics of faith brands -- Has religious marketing gone too far?
10. Spiritual goods : faith traditions and the practice of business: Herman, Stewart W
 - a. From the truly real to spiritual wisdom: religious perspectives on business practice -- Buddhism -- Christianity -- Islam -- Judaism.
11. Politically incorrect : the emerging faith factor in American politics: Reed, Ralph
 - a. The winning coalition : people of faith uniting together
12. Philosophy and culture -- East and West; East-West philosophy in practical perspective, Charles A. Moore
 - a. Philosophy and human conduct/Sidney Hook -- Societal structures and processes
13. Interviews (multiple professional participants - conducted by Joe Fazio via e-mail)

CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI)

RCR FOR SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL & EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS Curriculum Completion Report Printed on 10/3/2012

Learner: Joseph Fazio (username: JMFazio)

Institution: Ball State University

Contact Information Department: Finance

Email: joefazio49@gmail.com

RCR FOR SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL & EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS: This course is for investigators, staff and students with an interest or focus in **Social and Behavioral** research. This course contains text, embedded case studies AND quizzes.

Stage 1. RCR Passed on 10/02/12 (Ref # 8881130)

Required Modules	Date Completed	Score
Ball State University	10/01/12	no quiz
Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research	10/01/12	no quiz
Research Misconduct 2-1495	10/01/12	5/5 (100%)
Data Acquisition, Management, Sharing and Ownership 2-1523	10/02/12	4/5 (80%)
Publication Practices and Responsible Authorship 2-1518	10/02/12	5/5 (100%)
Peer Review 2-1521	10/02/12	5/5 (100%)
Mentor and Trainee Responsibilities 01234 1250	10/02/12	5/5 (100%)
Using Animal Subjects in Research 13301	10/02/12	5/8 (63%)
Conflicts of Interest and Commitment 2-1462	10/02/12	3/6 (50%)
Collaborative Research 2-1484	10/02/12	3/5 (60%)
Human Subjects 13566	10/02/12	4/5 (80%)
The CITI RCR Course Completion Page	10/02/12	no quiz

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Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Course Coordinator

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Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher Curriculum Completion Report Printed on 10/3/2012

Learner: Joseph Fazio (username: JMFazio)

Institution: Ball State University

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Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher: Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

Stage 1. Basic Course Passed on 10/03/12 (Ref # 8881129)

Required Modules	Date Completed	Score
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction	10/02/12	3/3 (100%)
Students in Research	10/02/12	7/10 (70%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBR	10/02/12	4/5 (80%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBR	10/03/12	4/5 (80%)
The Regulations and The Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR	10/03/12	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk in Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR	10/03/12	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBR	10/03/12	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBR	10/03/12	5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBR	10/03/12	4/4 (100%)
Research with Children - SBR	10/03/12	2/4 (50%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBR	10/03/12	4/4 (100%)
International Research - SBR	10/03/12	2/3 (67%)
Internet Research - SBR	10/03/12	5/5 (100%)
Research and HIPAA Privacy Protections	10/03/12	3/5 (60%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees	10/03/12	4/4 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects	10/03/12	3/5 (60%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research	10/03/12	1/3 (33%)
Ball State University	10/01/12	no quiz

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